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Relations Between U.S. and Panama

Mike Mansfield 1903-2001

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teammate, presently Carl Stephens, of Lexington, Ky. Theirs hasn't always been an easy task.

Most of the adults of Zipacón are farm workers who earn about 50 cents a day laboring in nearby fields. Until recently, they were accustomed to expect all benefits to flow from the top down—from the central Government, the big landowners or the church.

Like their forefathers, they waited for improvements to come from these traditional sources rather than organizing to get things done themselves. Down through the years, as a result, improvements came slowly in Zipacón—when at all.

At the start, many villagers saw the Peace Corps as a sort of philanthropic agency from which new benefits—including lots of cash—would flow. Some still think that way, despite contrary evidence. Others have answered calls for volunteers on various projects, have worked or watched a while, then drifted away. Still others have refused to cooperate.

MOMENT OF CRISIS

At one point last December, it even looked as if the Peace Corps might have to pull out of Zipacón by public demand.

Trouble broke out when a newspaper in Bogotá printed an overly vivid account of the difficulties facing the two Americans in the rural community. A few irate citizens, claiming that the article pictured their village in a bad light, organized a strong protest that singled out the Peace Corps for blame.

Dennis Grubb and his partner left town for a 2-week Christmas vacation, not knowing whether they would be able to resume work here. But several of their new friends got busy and rallied the villagers to their support. The Peace Corps men were welcomed back with a community celebration in their honor.

One measure of how far the civic do-it-yourself movement has gone since then is the number of villagers who show up each weekday morning for voluntary work details. In recent months, the turnout has numbered almost 80 percent of the farm workers in the district, working on their "off" days.

STORY OF A SCHOOL

The story of the building of the Santa Ana school shows how the Peace Corps works hand in hand with the local residents to push through improvements.

People in the Rincón Santo district had been trying to get a school for some time before the Peace Corps moved in. They had an acre of land available, but no money to pay for construction. That left 40 children in the district without classroom or teacher.

The Peace Corps men found the villagers willing to build the school themselves if they could get the materials. It was decided to put up a temporary structure that would qualify the district to get a teacher assigned by the state government.

The Peace Corps brought in a simple, hand-operated machine for making building blocks. The machine was provided by CARE, the international welfare agency. Soon, the villagers were turning out blocks made of local materials. Volunteer workers got donations of other necessary building materials. The school was finished in 1 month, and a teacher arrived a few weeks later to start the first classes.

NEEDED: A ROAD

Next, Corpsman Grubb and a village leader approached a business firm in Bogotá that had established a plan to devote part of its profits to the construction of permanent rural schools. To be eligible for such aid the village had to provide a road to the school site.

The Americans checked around and got the loan of a bulldozer from a Colombian Government agency. The community agreed to

pay for fuel for the bulldozer and to put in culverts and fencing along the new road. Money for this was raised by holding a bazaar.

Both men and women chipped in to help build the road. Mr. Grubb and his partner did the surveying and helped operate the bulldozer. They pitched in and shoveled dirt when necessary.

When the road was finished, the company in Bogotá donated \$2,500 for the new school. In 9 weeks, with almost every able-bodied citizen of the district taking part, the red-brick building was completed.

Out of that project, the Peace Corps got more than a school built. It got the first civic-action committee in the area that is now entirely on its own. The Peace Corps is no longer needed to spur action or round up work details. And that was one of its major goals.

"It's the future we are concerned about," says Mr. Grubb. "That one school is nothing to what these people can do for themselves in years to come with confidence and community spirit."

THE NEXT TARGET

For the immediate future, the Peace Corps has various projects in the works in Zipacón. One is the expansion of a tiny health center, which now has few drugs and limited medical equipment. Another is the building of a second school. Also active are plans for more roads to link the village with nearby communities and make it a market center.

In the meantime, the two Americans keep busy on a variety of other chores. Recently, they plastered the town with announcements of a free chest X-ray and vaccination program, provided by a Government medical team. The two also showed a movie that emphasized the importance of protection against smallpox. There was a record turnout when the doctors arrived in Zipacón.

The people of Zipacón long since have accepted the Peace Corps men as fellow members of the community. Children hail them in the streets. They are star players on the basketball team of the local athletic club. When the Governor of the Department of Cundinamarca appeared at a festival in Zipacón recently, village leaders asked Mr. Grubb to make the welcoming speech.

FOR REDS: A QUESTION

Even the Communists in Bogotá have been taking notice of the Peace Corps work in Zipacón and other villages. Not long ago, two Communists appeared at a village function and tried to stir up a protest against the United States.

"Let's talk about you Communists," said Mr. Grubb. "Just what have you done to help the people of Zipacón?" The Reds had no answer.

For the U.S. taxpayer, the cost of helping Zipacón to develop itself has been small. The two Americans each get Colombian money equivalent to about \$122 a month. Another \$75 a month is credited to their accounts back in the United States toward the day when they leave the Peace Corps. In their first year they received about \$150 more for housing, furniture, and work clothing.

In addition, CARE provided supplies worth \$1,400—a mimeograph machine for public notices, medical, and sports kits for schools, surveying equipment, books, and a horse. The Peace Corps team in Zipacón has no motor vehicle.

In looking back on his first 12 months in Zipacón, Mr. Grubb is cautious about making any claims. He feels a sense of accomplishment at having been able to adjust to different customs, different living conditions, and a different language. But he feels, too, that the job he started in Zipacón—helping other people to help themselves—has barely begun.

"There's a lot more work to be done here," he says. "You can't hope to succeed in this

type of work in 1 year—maybe not even in 5 years. But I believe we have made a start in the right direction."

RELATIONS BETWEEN UNITED STATES AND PANAMA

Mr. MANSFIELD. Mr. President, on January 15 I directed certain remarks to the issues dividing the United States and the Republic of Panama over the canal. Irritants in our relations with that country have existed for many years. And easy solutions can hardly be expected. But the recent efforts to relieve even the pressure of these issues have not been very successful. The Inter-American Peace Committee of the Organization of American States has not been able to break through the impasse.

At present diplomatic relations between Panama and the United States remain suspended. It is to be hoped that Panamanians will consider the implications of continued suspension, to themselves as well as to us. It is to be hoped that they will come to understand that any eventual solution must be at least reasonably palatable to both sides.

The United States has expressed willingness to consider all matters at issue with Panama. But we can hardly be expected to agree to make prior commitment on what may result from a confrontation yet to be held. Our position finds a legal basis in the accepted practices of international law. And it also finds, I believe, a sound basis in equity and good sense. We do not ask the Panamanians to agree in advance to this outcome or that. We do not ask them to humiliate themselves as a precondition of the confrontation. It is wrong for large nations to make tyrannical demands of this nature on small nations. And it is equally wrong for the small to tyrannize the large in the same fashion.

It is proper that any nation—large or small—decline to negotiate under pressure. That is not to say that it is proper to fail to recognize that a real pressure for discussions does exist in the canal situation. It is compounded of such factors as the conspicuous privilege of zone residents in the midst of a largely poverty stricken but intensely nationalistic people. And somehow, Mr. President, the privilege of the alien seems always to be more conspicuous than that which is found among one's own countrymen—and it does exist among Panamanians themselves.

The pressure is compounded, too, Mr. President, of the fact that the rental fees, the toll fees, personnel, and other management practices of the Canal Company have not changed very much in the half century of operations. Such has been the case although vast changes have occurred in the world's commerce, in the utility of the canal and in the nation which the canal bisects. All of these matters and others are, appropriately, subject to discussion, consideration, or whatever. Most important, they are subject to new understanding and mutual agreement on adjustments of relationships, as between the two countries.

But the Panamanian Government surely recognizes that the reestablish-

ment of diplomatic relations must precede such understanding and adjustment. Surely it must recognize that unfounded charges of aggression lead, not toward but away from understanding and agreement. Surely it must recognize, as do we, that those who counsel violence, ill will, and disorder have nothing to offer to the solution of the difficulty.

There are those who play all sorts of variations on the theme of a hysterical self-righteousness, who in a situation such as this always seek to exacerbate differences and prevent solutions by stirring mud in the waters of volatile nationalism.

There are also those who seek solution by reason and reasonable adjustment, who realize that extreme statements and calls to violence can only undermine efforts for a just and equitable agreement.

We—and I believe I speak now of the great preponderance of Americans—have no desire other than to accord decent treatment to Panama in specific arrangements involving the canal. And I am sure the great preponderance of Panamanians would have no desire other than to accord the United States an equally decent treatment. The difficulties arise in inflamed passions induced by extraneous considerations or by long-standing and unnecessary irritants.

From our point of view, it seems to me essential that we get clear in our own minds and make clear to Panama that the basic U.S. interests which is involved is trouble-free and effective usage of the canal for our own and for international commerce and for the defense of this hemisphere. And I cannot believe that the Panamanians, upon dispassionate reflection, would want anything else for the canal.

The time has come when both sides must bend their efforts toward reaching a satisfactory accommodation of those differences and misunderstandings—those secondary matters which threaten that usage.

There is a much greater basis for friendship and amity than for hate and enmity as between the people of the United States and the people of Panama. There is the compelling need to get on with the struggle to achieve economic and social development in Panama under the Alliance for Progress. There is a whole range of other hemispheric and international problems upon which the two countries have seen and can continue to see eye to eye. Insofar as the difficulties over the canal and the zone persist, they jeopardize this close relationship and introduce a note of uncertainty into the whole of hemispheric relations.

As for the Panama Canal itself, it is clear that its growing obsolescence requires additional water passage somewhere through the Americas between the Atlantic and Pacific and I am delighted to see that the distinguished chairman of the Commerce Committee [Mr. MAGNUSON] has made it clear that the search for an appropriate second route—a route in addition to the Panama Canal—should begin now in earnest. The Panamanian Government has asked that we

consider building a new canal within its borders. But I cannot see that another U.S.-built canal through Panama will do anything but double the existing problem. Certainly it would be unthinkable, in the absence of a solution of the present difficulty, a solution which is clearly acceptable to the people of both sides, a solution with built-in mechanisms for adjustments to meet changing needs in the years ahead. But as circumstances are now, I have no hesitancy in saying that Panama decidedly is not the place and that one headache of this kind is enough for this or any nation.

Another possibility, as I have suggested, is a canal across the Isthmus of Tehuantepec to be constructed and operated by the Government of Mexico. If it is feasible, financial and technical aid might be forthcoming from international lending agencies and from other potential heavy users, including the United States. But I want to stress that any such project should be carried out under Mexican control and the resultant canal should be operated by Mexico. What the rest of the world has a right to expect in return for such aid that it may provide is a mutually acceptable juridical system which will guarantee fair rates for the canal and open and equal access to its facilities to all nations.

The technical feasibility of such an undertaking in Tehuantepec was established several years ago by a series of studies commissioned by Pemex, the Mexican oil company. Mexico is a stable, democratic nation whose creditworthiness and well-developed sense of international responsibility are in themselves important guarantors of effective management of a canal of this kind.

While a new canal in Mexico or elsewhere may offer a long-range alleviation of the problem, it is not a substitute for facing the immediate and urgent difficulties of the present canal. The construction of a new canal, necessary and desirable as it is, is not an alternative, if for no other reason than that it would take several years to build.

For the present, either under the aegis of the OAS or in direct confrontation, the United States and Panama must be prepared to set aside charge and countercharge, to resume diplomatic relations, and to get on with discussion, conference, or whatever, with a view to mutually acceptable agreement on the specific questions and irritants involving the zone and the canal. Once the passions and the irritants have been put aside, on both sides, it is not at all impossible that both sides will see that there is an overriding common interest in the trouble-free operation of the waterway and will make those sensible adjustments in the existing situation which are necessary to insure it.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. MANSFIELD. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

AUTHORITY FOR CERTAIN INVESTIGATIONS BY THE COMMITTEE ON AERONAUTICAL AND SPACE SCIENCES

The Senate resumed the consideration of the resolution (S. Res. 254) authorizing certain investigations by the Committee on Aeronautical and Space Sciences.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The question is on agreeing to the resolution.

Mr. ELLENDER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I may make a general statement pertaining to all the pending resolutions.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

GENERAL STATEMENT

Mr. ELLENDER. Mr. President, I had hoped that the Senate would follow the lead of the President of the United States who is trying to curtail the expenses of the executive branch. I had hoped that we would try to curtail our own. However, it seems that the amounts being asked for by the many subcommittees are identical to the amounts asked for last year.

As I have said on many occasions, some of the subcommittees do good work, and their work should, of course, be continued. However, many of them were organized on a more or less temporary basis years ago, and they continue to exist. As a result of the creation of so many subcommittees, all the extra space that was provided by the construction of the New Senate Office Building, all of the additional space that was provided in the Old Senate Office Building, and all the space that was provided in the Capitol by the extension of the East Front is now occupied.

As I have contended in the past, the additional space which has been made available and the creation of subcommittees to fill it, has resulted in the employment of more and more employees. There are entirely too many employees on the Hill. It would seem to me that if the standing committees of the Senate were to use the moneys that are allocated to them in order to operate, a fair job could be done of running this Nation's Government. Each standing committee now receives, for each fiscal year, \$142,250 to pay for 10 employees, 6 of whom are clerks, and 4 specialists. A few standing committees do their work within the allotment, but most of them have formed the habit of creating a number of subcommittees. This is especially true of the Committee on the Judiciary.

Last year that committee spent, aside from its regular allotment, in excess of \$1 million. This year, again, it is asking for a sum in excess of \$1 million to continue studies from year to year and, of course, to maintain many of the employees on the Hill.

Last year, according to figures compiled by the Rules Committee, we provided for all the committees—and this is aside from the usual and standard \$142,000 allotment to each standing committee—\$4,264,733, on an 11-month